

# **Governor Haley Barbour to Write, Call Every PLAD Recipient with Medicare Enrollment Help**

## ***Letters Begin Arriving Today***

(Jackson, Miss.) *"Don't be afraid. We will make sure you have what you need before September 15."* This is the closing line of a letter written by Governor Haley Barbour on behalf of the Division of Medicaid to all 65,000 Medicaid recipients shifting to Medicare in the coming weeks.

During the announcement of his extension of the Medicaid-to-Medicare transition deadline to September 15 last month, Governor Barbour said he would launch a public information campaign to instruct those PLADs (Poverty Level Aged and Disabled) recipients about the attractive health care options available to them. That effort began today as two letters began arriving in the homes of recipients across Mississippi.

The first letter goes to the 18,000 PLADs recipients who are eligible for federal waivers to stay on Medicaid. The letter reports on Governor Barbour and the Division of Medicaid's recent negotiations with federal officials and why the state is confident of getting permission to keep them on Medicaid due to their special condition.

The second letter will go to the rest of the PLADs population, announcing the program change, deadline extension, available Medicare and patients' assistance

programs and that more information will follow in the weeks to come.

Since some of the PLADs recipients may have trouble getting mail or may have reading difficulties, the letters will be followed by an automated phone call from Governor Barbour outlining the letters' messages.

In coming weeks, a second letter will be sent by Division of Medicaid Executive Director Dr. Warren Jones to all PLADs recipients enclosed with Medicare enrollment help. This letter will be followed by a live patch-through phone call. This is a live call that will go to the recipient's home asking them if they would like to be automatically connected to their closest Medicaid regional office for assistance from a caseworker in enrolling in Medicare.

Governor Barbour says the launch of this effort is why he extended the transition deadline. "To ensure Medicaid's future, this change is the right thing to do - now we need to make sure we do it the right way," he said. "Instead of waiting on PLADs recipients to call Medicaid for help, we are going to initiate the calls to offer help. We will be very aggressive in our information and assistance campaign until we feel like we have done our best in contacting everyone affected," he added.

Dr. Jones said he was unaware of any other states that have taken a more proactive role in communicating a change to a segment of their Medicaid population. "This is an extraordinary effort our staff is about to undertake. We are going to go above and beyond to make sure these recipients get the information they need," he said.

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